

### March 11, 1901

- Entire city charter re-written to incorporate city and grant it powers to buy and sell land, enter into contracts, etc. with power vested in aldermen (two per ward plus mayor elected by board of aldermen).
- Ward boundaries identified
- Lengthy descriptions on management of elections: voter registration, selection of election officials, voter qualifications, challenges, descriptions of ballots
- Vacancies on Board of Aldermen filled by internal selection
- City officials appointed by Board of Aldermen
- Mayor's Court established for crimes in city to replace courts held by Justices of Peace, convicted can appeal to Superior Court; Mayor can force vagrants to find job within 24 hours or leave city; provisions for Mayor to arrest and close houses of "ill-fame"
- Aldermen's powers listed: licensing for saloons; suppress gaming and "bawdy houses;" regulate public performances for money; regulate butcher shops, storage of combustibles, street and sidewalk maintenance, railroad traffic, public drunkenness, animal control, ringing of bells, contagious disease controls, burials, markets, food markets, public water and sewage, trash controls, building construction; new street construction and ability to condemn land to construct streets; assess taxes for street maintenance; to oversee sewage, electrification, police and fire departments; maintain hospital; power to tax animals, real and personal property, provisions, trades, occupations, etc to operate city; power to penalize citizens for failure to list or pay taxes and foreclose on property for non-payment
- Board of Audit and Finance with five members appointed by Governor for two year term; Board reviews expenditures of city and pays city bills, approves tax rates set by Aldermen, fix salaries of city employees, must approve contracts for city work before contract signed; manage "sinking fund"
- City can borrow money for expenses of city
- Establishment of a public park
- Rules for holding primaries for municipal elections established
- Most prior statutes related to Wilmington since incorporation in 1756 repealed
- New charter to be approved by citizens through a vote

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Board of Commissioners of New Hanover County authorized to collect taxes to fund annual appropriation of \$300 for the Wilmington Light Infantry and Wilmington Division of the North Carolina Naval Brigade.

- \*\* Subsequent changes to the charter, beginning in 1903 and for at least the next decade, were minor and were efforts to solidify control over city affairs by the leaders within the Democratic Party.
- \*\* There were 15 changes to the charter between 1866 and 1897 and, beginning in 1899, there were only five changes over the next ten years.
- \*\* Ward structure changed three times between 1870 and 1877:
  - 1870: 5 wards
  - 1875: 3 wards
  - 1877: 5 wards
- \*\* The standard structure of five wards for the city became the norm and was perpetuated in the 1901 charter. The re-drawn ward lines of 1877 were used for the 1901 re-write of the charter.